

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

BY ARTHUR DILLON

A

0006857866



0006857866 SCIENCE FICTION LIBRARY PA 100

2/6th



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

<http://www.archive.org/details/maidofartemis00dilliala>

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

By the same Author.

RIVER SONGS AND OTHER POEMS.

THE GREEK KALENDS.

KING WILLIAM I, THE CONQUEROR.

THE
MAID OF ARTEMIS

BY
ARTHUR DILLON

LONDON
ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET

1906

NOTE

The Play is now largely revised since its first publication in "River Songs and Other Poems." Two of the songs, under the titles of "*The Young Year*" and "*Satyr nimble*," set by Charles E. Baughan, are published by Messrs. Boosey & Co.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

IDMON, King of Argos.

AGIS.

DAPHNIS.

MILO.

CREON.

A SOLDIER.

EVADNE, Wife to Agis.

PYRRHA, Daughter to Idmon.

IO, Sister to Daphnis.

AN OLD PRIESTESS OF ARTEMIS.

A COUNTRY WIFE.

SOLDIERS AND MAIDS OF ARTEMIS.

Scene—ARGOLIS.

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

SCENE I.—ARGOLIS: A FOREST. BEFORE IO'S
COTTAGE.

(Enter PYRRHA.)

PYRRHA. Now help me, Artemis, for I am thine !
Not at thy steps a victim, but instead,
A living maiden of the woods, but thine
No less. Stay, this is some poor cottier's home ;
A safer than a palace. Pray you, sirs,
Give me to eat.

Io (*Within*). And welcome, with that voice.
But hush, one here lies sick.

(Enters from Cottage.)

Pardon, sweet lady.

PYRRHA. I pray you pardon me. But I am faint ;
And, I must tell you, in much danger. Here,

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

This bracelet wear, if you will shelter me ;
And yet I think I know enough of eyes
To know this needless.

Io. Hide here in the cot,
If any follow you. What is your fear ?

PYRRHA. The way men think to serve the Gods.

Io. Come in,
But softly, pray. My brother who is all the world
To me lies sick nigh unto death.

PYRRHA. Not so ?
I have some skill, much skill do flatterers say,
In herbs and medicine and antidotes.
Let me but try my craft.

Io. Let you ? Oh ! Try it ;
And I would die to serve you if you save him.

PYRRHA. Pursuit's at hand.

Io. I'll charm it from the door ;
Say then if Io knows not to be true.

(Exeunt into Cottage.)

(Enter CREON.)

CREON. I love not this ; and yet slow time bears
witness

What the Gods will is best. Their oracle
Hath said it, "None shall reign in Argolis
Save Pyrrha be devote to Artemis."

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

Pyrtha, the daughter of our king, now fled,
Hearing her doom. And I must track and bring
The living prey to death. I never saw her,
For still she was immured about the shrine
Of that great Goddess. But she has been tracked;
For all men marked the raiment that she wore.
One had her ring, exchanged for food. Here see
One I must question.

(*Enter COUNTRY WIFE.*)

WIFE. Save you, gallant sir!

CREON. Gramercy, dame. Pray have you met in
the woods

A maid of gentle nurture? In the hunt
Such one was parted from us, and with heed
We seek her.

WIFE. Here are gentle maids enough,
But none enough gentle to be this maid.

CREON. Is there a village near?

WIFE. La! never a village;
But scattered up and down you find the folk.

CREON. Guide me where I may question others.
See;

You shall not lose your time. (*Gives money.*)

WIFE. Nor you your bounty!
Io!

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

(Re-enter, from Cottage, Io.)

How does your brother, Io?

Io. Not so well.

What is there I could do?

WIFE. 'Tis past my leechcraft,
Though I am reckoned wise. This lord hereby
Would hear of a lady gay lost here-away.
Hast seen such? A rare lady.

CREON. In the chase,
By misadventure parted from her train.

Io. I watch the sick-bed; of what goes abroad
Know little. Ask, sir, at other doors.

CREON. I will.
Far be it from me to molest the sick.
I cannot wish success. *(Aside.)*

WIFE *(To CREON)*. Here at your service.
I'll track thee every path to every cot.

CREON *(Aside)*. Yet must I think
Idmon too fearful; for our men are bold,
Numerous and well practised as the foe.

(Enter SOLDIER.)

SOLDIER. My Lord, I bring these from my liege
the king,
Sent with hot speed.

CREON. What may this tell me?

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

WIFE. Goodman,
What prince is he?

SOLDIER. A chief captain to the king, the Lord
Creon.

CREON (*Reads*). "Most trusted; whereas we
were hard pressed, we are now beleaguered. Our
general, Butes, in one battle with Agis, has lost both
his army and his life. What hope remains to us is
fixed upon your known skill in a city's defence. Leave,
therefore, this necessary quest, and hasten to us for
the dispatch of war's more necessary affairs.

"Idmon, of Argos, king."

Haste, then, much liefer than to hunt this maid
The stricken field! What ground hath gained the
foe?

SOLDIER. All; right from whence he came up to
our walls;

Where camps he, though the other side is open.

(*Exeunt CREON and SOLDIER.*)

WIFE. Knows he your face?

Io. I hardly think so.

DAPHNIS (*Within*). Where was it? In the sky?

Io. He knows not what he says.

DAPHNIS (*Within*). When will it be light?

WIFE. Why, it is high noon now.

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

If he live not, we know not who 'tis dies.
That chain of gold he weareth—

IO. I know well,
And what you tell of it.

WIFE. Yes, it was clasped
About his neck when you and he were found,
Two pretty babes, left in the woods. Why he,
He went on four legs still, the chuck.

IO. Well, mother,
I care not whose we are, for twain we found,
Your neighbour and her goodman, who made up
Whatever loss we had.

WIFE. Peace be with them!
The good dame showed me how upon his neck,
Crossed by the chain, there was a blood-red mark.
'Tis sixteen years gone now.

DAPHNIS (*Within*). Io, you leave me!

IO. My pretty brother, no; not I.
(*Exit Io into Cottage.*)

DAPHNIS (*Within*). You leave me!

WIFE. Poor boy! she would not leave thee for the
world.

An open-handed lord. *Lose time, quotha?*
What lady did he seek?

(*Exit.*)

SCENE II.—BEFORE AGIS' HOME.

(*Enter EVADNE and MILO.*)

EVADNE. Tell me, stout Milo, how is the field gone?

All yesterday the sky was muffled up
In frighting darkness. But how went the field?

MILO. To tell you this I came. Agis, your lord,
Is crowned in Argos.

EVADNE. We should praise his valour,
Were he less near than husband.

MILO. Rather praise
The gods who gave us victory. For they
Gave it most wonderfully!

EVADNE. How wonderfully?

MILO. Butes then nine days back in open field
Had fallen, as you heard; and every day,
Pitched by the town, we did assault its walls,
Though still with loss.

EVADNE. Who led?

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

MILO.

Agis himself.

Then in the town of nights the swingeing axe
We heard at work. Till, on the tenth day's fight,
As we drew shattered off, over the walls
They shot a bridge of wood, down which, arrayed
In full front, shield to shield, their phalanx flowed
Upon our broken ranks.

EVADNE. And then you rallied,
As when the swarthy bear, driven to bay,
Turns on the hounds?

MILO. I saw my lord stand forth,
Most like that bear, but with him scarce a man.

EVADNE. And you were with him?

MILO. I was. Onward they came,
In the forefront their king; while heavy darkness,
Such as you say, weighed down the air. When, lo,
Out of the riven clouds the gods hurled down
A thunderbolt upon him!

EVADNE. Oh! their altars
Shall speak our gratitude.

MILO. That was enough;
The scale was turned, and up the bridge swept we,
Cutting them piecemeal.

EVADNE. So is Idmon perished!

MILO. Burnt up until we could not find his corse.

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

EVADNE. The gods fulfil their oracles ! But Agis
Stands no more safe. "None reigns in Argolis,
Save Pyrrha be devote to Artemis."

MILO. True.

EVADNE. Then a maid named Pyrrha must we
seek.

MILO. I have it sure, King Idmon seven times
Sent with rich gifts if he might sacrifice
Another than his daughter.

EVADNE. And each time
It was refused ?

MILO. The priestess as she spake,
When Artemis possessed her, steadfastly
On the king's daughter looked. Hence, say the wise,
She is demanded.

EVADNE. Then must she be found.

MILO. You would not have her slain ?

EVADNE. There is a time
For tenderness ; but when my purpose calls,
You know my nature.

MILO. Yes, you sent me forth
With Agis' children by his first sweet wife,
To make your boy sole offspring.

EVADNE. I did. And you
Returned without them. I will press my lord

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

To have her sought for. She who would not die
To save her father, dies to save his foe.
I will to Argos now.

MILO. There I should bring you
Where you shall share the crown.

EVADNE. I will prepare.
When I arrive, to this most timely quest,
Your hand shall be commissioned instantly.

(Exit.)

MILO. If dark deeds make long reigns, her king
 reigns long.

But that last time she plotted, on her camp
Stole the familiar spirit, hooded Death,
She had not reckoned with. For men with Death
Are like a jolly tippler with mine host;
See, but scarce heed, until he shows the score,
And must have payment. Whew! her plots, and boy
For whom they were, are swept beyond all reach.

(Exit.)

(Enter IDMON with his eyes bandaged, led by CREON.)

IDMON. Why dost thou hustle me?

CREON. Idmon, to keep thee safe,
Out of ken of Milo where he stalks.
This is the home of Agis; here my craft
Assures me thou art unlooked-for.

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

IDMON. Tarry not.

The smell of carnage is upon my robe,
And fire upon my locks. Both armies ween
I am consumed in that heavenly flash
Which, dazzling all men, me hath dazed for good,
And left me one sense short.

CREON. While battle winked
Aghast with tempest, thou escapedst the field,
Under the black wing of confusion.
Oh, grip my hand, and hurry to the woods
Where, well I know, discovery may be mocked.
(Exeunt.)

SCENE III.—BEFORE IO'S COTTAGE.

*(Enter, from Cottage, DAPHNIS, PYRRHA in a dress of
Io's, and Io.)*

IO. You lose the gentle hand of courtly ease
To find rough faring.

PYRRHA. It is well exchanged.

(Sings.)

The year is young and so are we ;
Nor yet have showed the flowers :
And still the wind goes whistling free
Through all the hawthorn bowers.
But though the flowers are not here,
And scarce a bud is peeping,
Oh, call not this a flowerless year :
Belike they are but sleeping.

The young year is a little child,
And full of childhood laughter :
Oh, every flower that bloweth wild
Will spring in season after !

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

The year is young, and so are we ;
And love is like the flowers :
Fond, warm and true our love will be,
For all these lack-love hours.

Io. Sing all day long ! Creon we heard recalled.

PYRRHA. Therefore, because all's safe, and thou
wouldst love it,

I'll rig thee in my fluttering bravery,
When I will warrant thy demeanour shall
Make thee the statelier vestal. By-and-by,
Thou shalt be Idmon's daughter in my stead !

Io. No. But one day we'll venture it in sport ;
And ye shall mock me in it.

PYRRHA. }
DAPHNIS. }

Not we !

Io. Ye will, ye will, ye will ! Now, honey-sweet,
I'll pull thee berries ripe and clustering.

PYRRHA (*Sings*).

Satyr nimble, ever shy,
Up the dale and up the glen,
Wend thy way from Grecian men ;
Through the brake and through the glades,
Foot it with our Grecian maids,
Satyr frolic, Satyr sly ;
Hymen will shake hands with thee,
Met beneath an ivied tree ;
But fly, oh, fly !

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

Nymphs that love the open sky,
Ye that haunt the bleating folds,
Or the breezy upland wolds,
When the wooing Fauns ye hear
Sighing low and singing clear,
Dainty Nymphs, do ye as I !
Faun or Satyr if ye see
Lurk beneath an ivied tree,
Then stay, or fly ?

DAPHNIS. Enchantment !

PYRRHA. Enchantment I put away
Even with my rich apparel.

DAPHNIS. Lady, nay ;
Sorriest sackcloth robing thee were fair.
But I offend.

PYRRHA. My vanity, beware !
Sun thyself, Daphnis, thou'rt yet weak to stand.

DAPHNIS. How thank thee, lady ?

PYRRHA. A courtier kissed my hand.

DAPHNIS (*Aside*). A teaching to earn chiding,
say my fears.

PYRRHA. If thou art none, thy fingers kiss to me.

DAPHNIS. Shall I blow thee a kiss ?

PYRRHA. Fie, at thy years !
Blows to a woman ? I have done with thee.
(*To Io.*) Thy brother is uncivil ; shall he not

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

Kneel at my feet till he hath pardon got ?
(To DAPHNIS.) Yet rest thy head on thy princess's
knee ;

So, Daphnis, shall I seem but country bred.
This shall make safety safe.

Io. Ten days are gone,
Since first thou found'st us. And our homely folk
Dream never maiden in my simple gown
Can the King's daughter be.

PYRRHA. Then, Daphnis, up !
I pillow thee no more ! Besides, my father,
Through half the score of years that I have known,
Enshrined me in the temple, till none knew
Of all his court my features. Not himself
He suffered see me ; but across a screen
Head-high we used to talk. Because he thought
Devoted meant but *given up*, not *slain*,
Till Agis set his face against our peace,
In the first shock successful. Then in fear
He chose the direr meaning. Now a change
Of raiment makes me safe. But you who give it
I cannot thank enough.

Io. My thanks are yours.
My brother Daphnis, like a heedless boy
Who ventures on the sheer cliff, to the edge,

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

And giddy stands, stood on the verge of life ;
And you were the strong hand that caught him back
Ere he could fall.

PYRRHA. That so I did delights me,
Both for itself, and for it has unlocked
Your heart to me. I never in my life
Felt such content as in the woods with you.
I find this gain in loss, that I have found
Even a friend by loss.

Io. Pyrrha, I loved you
Before you saved my brother's life. The trees
Are dear to me, and dear this air ; and oft
I thought me happy, till you came to teach
How much more " happy " means. No hand alive
But could but cherish thee, thou art so sweet.

PYRRHA. The old priestess loves me ! yet, so strong
her vows,
If I the chaplet of a victim wear,
She slays me in ruth's despite.

Io. If I be by,
No harm shall touch thee, saving first it pierce
My bosom through and through.

DAPHNIS. And mine ! Ah, me !
Laugh when I boast.

Io. That will we merrily.

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

PYRRHA. But I will weep when thou such boast
fulfil,

Live Daphnis !

DAPHNIS. Yes ?

PYRRHA. Thy health commends my skill.

DAPHNIS. I would commend her. Therefore
blessed health

That sings her praises, as it were, by stealth. (*Aside.*)

PYRRHA. Speak to us twain ; thou art poor com-
pany,

Turned so about, and muttering to a tree.

But, lo, one comes ! Liegeman, lay here thy curls !

No, no, I pray, stand up.

Io. Hang not thy head.

PYRRHA. Remember I am *Chloe*.

(*Enter COUNTRY WIFE.*)

WIFE. Good day, neighbours.

Io. } Good day to you.

PYRRHA.

WIFE. Your brother is deadly sick.

Io. Nay, mother, he is healed, and gathers
strength.

WIFE. I cannot see, forsooth. Did this maid heal
him ?

Io. Yes, mother.

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

WIFE. Poisons are burnt out by poison.
Though she has healed him, she has made him sick;
Healed body, stricken breast.

Io. Peace, mother, peace!

WIFE. The lad is sick; Io, where he stands even now,
With head down as the grass were book. Take care!
Who heals can kill.

Io. Peace, mother, he is whole.

WIFE (To DAPHNIS). Whither away?

Io. Whither?

DAPHNIS. The sun is hot;
I fly for shade.

WIFE. Race in the dog-days not.

DAPHNIS. Give me good leave to run; the air is
chill.

PYRRHA. Artemis help thee!

DAPHNIS. Oh, I am tongue-tied still!
(Exit.)

WIFE. Well, then, enough of this. But have you
heard
The news they tell abroad? They say the king
Has lost the day, and wanders in the woods.

PYRRHA. What? What say they? Is he—you
said the king—
Heard you no more?

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

WIFE. Why, bless you, gentle maid,
It harms not us. I reckon not much of kings.
But I must on. Good luck be with your brother.

(Exit.)

PYRRHA. I pray this be not true. If we should
meet—

I know my father's voice and he knows mine ;
Though each to other all unknown by sight,
As I have told you, yet my voice he knows—
If we should meet, dear Io, feign me dumb ;
A part I'll play to be unknown of him,
Lest, finding me, he curse me. Could I not
Have died for his good fortune? He had taken
My life that he first gave. So do the gods,
And yet we love them no one thought the less ;
So I my father no one thought less love.

(Exeunt into Cottage.)

(Enter IDMON led by CREON.)

IDMON. Into what sort of country are we come?

CREON. The same deep forest that for five long miles
Hath girt us without break.

IDMON. See you no end?

CREON. The trees grow here more scattered,
promising
That clownage near his living may eke out;

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

And, from his little, may afford thee more
Than all thy wealth remaining.

IDMON. I must rest ;
I will not keep you long.

CREON. My liege, my life's term !

IDMON. The Gods doomed, or that bridge you built
had saved us.

Why did you lead me from the field, when fear
Had bid me stay ?

CREON. Fear you to live, my liege ?
Now is not when, nor I the man, to teach ;
Yet scorn not you the glorious gift of life
That yet is spared, I cannot but divine,
Not by old shaking Chance. The god's own hand
Left your soul living though struck off your crown.

IDMON. We found our empires on the sands of
time ;
They are foredoomed to fall. All men know this,
Yet when the law in his own case holds good
Each thinks it strange. But now, most trusted lord,
A blind king can nor win nor wear a crown.
Hence thine allegiance do I will away
To our late foe ; make peace with, nay, more, serve
This king of Argos.

CREON. Good my liege, what mean you ?

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

You know me true.

IDMON. True to the soul I know you.

CREON. And is not now when I should show my truth?

IDMON. No! Truth a king needs in his hour of prime,

When untruth dogs him round. But what man now
Would lie to me? This service I retain;
Thou shalt not—not for any hope—reveal
Where I am hid.

CREON. My liege, I promise it.

IDMON. Well, then, away! But let me once more,
Though never more, a king.

CREON (*Kneels*). My honoured liege,
I will obey at full. (*Rising, aside.*)

But first will watch,
Until he hath some shelter. (*Aloud.*) Yet this king,
Our Agis who is grown so confident,
Shall not reign long, let but the Fates keep trust!

IDMON. He cannot slay my daughter. Would to
Zeus

I had her now! We do but double loss,
Striving with fate; but I am justly paid;
I had a treasure more than kingdom's worth;
Where is it? Leave me here.

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

(*Enter DAPHNIS.*)

CREON. This boy looks simple.
Prithee, good youth, care for this stricken lord
Till you shall hear from me. In the meantime
This shall requite your pains.

DAPHNIS. Good sir, I will.
If you would find him, yonder, by the well,
You see my home.

CREON (*To IDMON*). The Gods watch over you!

IDMON. Find better fortune.

(*Exit CREON.*)

DAPHNIS. My lord, what ails your eyes?

IDMON. Nothing, boy, ails them,
More than aught ails the dead. The lightning
touched them,
And they are not. Greater lights quench the less.

(*Enter, from Cottage, PYRRHA and Io.*)

PYRRHA. Kind was the priestess, yet her kindness
fell

But cold and distant; not like yours, sweet Io;
But snow upon a frozen summit lone.

Io. Our love and not your losses drew me near.
You are still above my head.

PYRRHA. I would I were not.

IDMON. What are these coming?

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

PYRRHA. Ha!

DAPHNIS. My sister and a friend.

IDMON. Footfalls and voices are a blind man's all.

PYRRHA (*To Io*). My father's voice! My father!

DAPHNIS. Io, for this honoured lord

We must make such home as our home can be.

10. Welcome and food and shelter, warmth and rest
Are yours whileas you will.

IDMON. The Gods requite you.

Me they requite enough, on evil deeds
Their righteous evil. On behalf of this,
This old and withered hair, this aged beard,
My daughter had gone young into her grave,
To bleach for aye.

DAPHNIS. Thou kindless father!

IDMON. Hush,

Upbraid not me, I am a fallen man,
Stricken quite blind and deeply penitent.

PYRRHA. Must I be dumb through this, and dumb
 through all? (*Aside.*)

Idmon. I am at thy mercy.

I pray thee, boy, thou lead me by the hand.

(*Exeunt OMNES into Cottage, IDMON led by PYRRHA.*)

SCENE IV.—BEFORE AGIS' HOME.

(Enter MILO, and CREON who kneels to him.)

MILO. What should a soldier with thee ?

CREON. Shed my blood ;

Thou slayest, then, a servant of the king.

MILO. Who is the king ?

CREON. Agis.

MILO. Thou dost acknowledge him ?

CREON. Ay, king by the chief attributes of a king ;
By power and might. Maybe, I can disclose—
And much it may import your state to learn—
Where Pyrrha is.

MILO. Wilt thou discover Pyrrha,
Her hiding and retreat ? Do this and live,
And live despised ; else die.

CREON. Trample the dead
And vanquished, at thy will. I offer this
In no vile barter of my life, proud lord,
But towards the advantage of dear Argolis

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

Which is my home and mother, for whose peace
I play with treachery, to prove most true.

MILO. I understand not that.
But that thou serve us truly, I advise,
At thine own proper peril.

CREON. My life is in thy hand,
To be thy hostage.

MILO. Less would not suffice.
Forget thy bruises whence thou goest lame,
And pilot me to Pyrrha, with my troop.
(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE V.—BEFORE IO'S COTTAGE.

(Enter, from Cottage, DAPHNIS.)

PYRRHA *(Within, sings).*

O merciless Queen
With eyes as the eyes above
That can be tender though keen,
Low in the mire I lay
My life before thy footway ;
Go dryshod over my love !

Youth, beautiful Youth,
With eyes as the stars above
Brimful, brimful of truth,
I would on the hard earth lay
My life before thy footway ;
Go blindfold over, my Love !

O Friendship to me,
With brow as the heaven above,
Pure as a forehead can be,
Thou in the mire wouldst lay
Thy life before my footway,
With, Go thou over, my Love !

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

King, Father and King
With eyes as the stars above
When daylight is hay-making,
Very fain would I lay
My life before thy footway;
Go blindly over my love !

DAPHNIS. My Lady Pyrrha to the darkness sings,
And I lie listening. But who am I ?
I do not know who gave to me my life,
For I was found under the greenwood tree.
Yet Lady Pyrrha gave to me my life,
Who saved it. I were graceless not to love her ;
Yet with how much more than that love, I love her.
Fie, fie ! She is the daughter of a king ;
And I—they found me lying in the woods ;
Under an oak that is the forest king,
The son, then, am I of the forest king !
O tricky heart that would beguile the head,
Alas, how little me your wiles bestead !
Here Pyrrha comes whose presence slakes my pain—
To make it burn the fiercer ; I'll away.
And yet in absence is my only gain,
To love her more and more from day to day.

(Exit DAPHNIS.)

(Enter, from Cottage, PYRRHA.)

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

PYRRHA (*Sings*).

In the first sweet hours of night
Sleeping did Endymion lie ;
Flushed with love Selene bright
Stole betwixt the earth and sky.
Now she stooped and now she stayed,
Warmed in love and chilled in fear ;
Standing by his side afraid,
Blushed she in the evening clear.

There she stood, her cheeks aglow,
Gazing on him longingly.
“ Ah ! ” she mused, “ he must not know
How my love hath mastered me.
Sleep, sweet boy, henceforth alway ;
Know no more of pain and bliss.”
Then she kissed him as he lay ;
But he never felt the kiss.

Oh, well I would my maiden choice were free
To love, and be loved back where I most love !
Daphnis dares not look up to lowly me
Who holds his lowliness all height above.

(*Enter, from Cottage, Io.*)

Io. You are still sad. Oh, learn a better way ;
Your father lives, although he lives in loss ;
Weigh life against loss.

PYRRHA. Loss ? I would gain more.

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

Io. What would you gain?

PYRRHA. The loss of royal birth,
To match my fortunes. For it is a cage,
However gilded, where the bird may sing,
But never ride in freedom on the wing.

Io. I would you would do what you can and sing—
That the old priestess taught you.

PYRRHA. Answer me.

(The Song.)

Oh, the bird is in her cage,
Youth is thrall to age.

BOTH.

Let be.

PYRRHA.

Who will break our chain,
Who set us free a-main?

BOTH.

Set us free?

PYRRHA.

King save from his crown,
Lad from learned frown?

BOTH.

Let be.

PYRRHA.

Bid friendship choose his friend
Where friendship's eyes commend?

BOTH.

Set us free?

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

PYRRHA.

Let lover lover wed,
Not long descent instead ?

BOTH.

Let be.

PYRRHA.

An if the world were so,
It saved a world of woe.

BOTH.

Set us free.

PYRRHA.

Then who shall put in act
Our fancy as a fact ?

BOTH.

Let be.

PYRRHA.

Three-score-and-ten doth doat,
And knows the past by rote.

BOTH.

Set us free.

PYRRHA.

Could we bid Care "Godspeed !
Coax miser from his greed !

BOTH.

Ah, me !

PYRRHA.

Leave for dead what dies ;
Freedom's lore is wise.

BOTH.

Ah, me !
Set us free !

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

PYRRHA. She was of low degree who made that song,
And taught me sing it, yet loved a king's son
Who loved back ; but the king thwarted their hopes,
And she became a Maid of Artemis.

Io. " King save from his crown ? " Our king is saved,
Tasting since yesterday, such life as I,
Busked as a gaffer of our foresters ;
But is it sweet to him ?

PYRRHA. I am to blame,
So long to leave him who is blind. But, Io,
My love of you makes me undutiful.

(Exit into Cottage.)

Io. I wonder how it is men can be found
Who dare be kings. Or how they have the heart
To do such deeds to be so. Pyrrha feared,
Because she fled, her father hated her.
But when he on himself reproaches heaped,
Who thought to slay her, she straight who she was
Revealed to him. Whereat his sudden joy
Showed how he loved her. Yet to keep his crown,
Her he had offered up.

(Re-enter DAPHNIS.)

DAPHNIS. Io, to hiding

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

With both our guests. Two officers of Agis
Have tracked our Princess, and this place have ringed
Already with a wall of men. And one
Who saw the Princess in her flight, and knows
Her face, a woodman, have they seized.

Io. Tell Pyrrha
To lead her father to the hollow tree ;
You with them.

DAPHNIS. Every tree, in trunk and branch,
I saw them search ; and like a serpent's coil
The ring still tightens.

Io. Do as I have said.
I in the cot remain, and give a story
How both fled yesternight. About it !
(*Exit, into Cottage, DAPHNIS.*)

Thus
And thus. This woodman knows her face and dress ;
If he find either, that is the Princess.
I in her raiment shall be found alone
Here in the cot. Her face being all unknown
Save to one hind who, I will venture, swears,
King's daughter whosoever such garment wears,
Makes easy personation.

(*Re-enter DAPHNIS, with IDMON as a Forester, and
PYRRHA.*)

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

Pray now, hide!

Trust to my wits.

PYRRHA. But, Io, there is danger; if they should
find deceit,
Your life would pay it.

Io. Never fear for me.
Quickly away!

DAPHNIS. Let me front danger too!
Sister, you are a churl to yield me none.
Let me stay in the cot.

Io. No, I am readier;
Boys always blunder. You shall trust in me.
But now, away! You know that tree we found,
Where all could hide. And ere they find you there,
I will have led them on false scent.

IDMON. How well
You teach me what a father's love should be.

(Exeunt OMNES. Io into Cottage.)

(Enter together the SOLDIER and the COUNTRY WIFE.)

WIFE. You cannot be certain of what you have
never seen.

SOLDIER. I tell you, good woman, we are certain
and doubly certain that there lurks hereabouts she
whom we seek.

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

WIFE. Then are you certain of more than I.

SOLDIER. We must assault and take every tree ; break our necks climbing, or have our heads broken for not.

WIFE. Well, well, there are men enough when all is done.

SOLDIER. Come, mother, if I would be rough, I could.

WIFE. It is not of your softness to be rough. You served the Lord Creon ; I saw you with him ; and you told me who he was.

SOLDIER. I did, and a good lord to serve.

WIFE. So say I, and a bounteous. But he served our king Idmon, and now you follow this Agis.

SOLDIER. If I have followed the living king, not died with the dead, I but follow my Lord Creon. He now commands us jointly with a right valiant soldier, Milo, the right hand of Agis. This is but talking. Take me where Idmon's daughter hides. Find her we shall ; and what skills it which of us first ?

WIFE. Then sit you still and be last.

SOLDIER. I mean what skills it either to her or to you ? If I find her, I have gold for my pains.

WIFE. Then I wish you few pains till they fall in the market.

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

SOLDIER. I need not keep all; and if you have helped find her—

WIFE. You will give me fair share of the nothing that you'll win. I tell you, she you seek is not here, or I should know it.

SOLDIER. Do you doubt our captain's word?

WIFE. There is none here but a silly, love-sick boy and a blind old man, yet withal young for his age, and two women such as I.

SOLDIER. Why, you told me a while ago they were young and winsome?

WIFE. And so they are.

SOLDIER. And so are you not.

WIFE. If you want love talk, so are you not. "Such as I" is "of no higher estate."

SOLDIER. I shall be missed by the captain; and then, Marsyas, save my skin better than your own! Will you not show me at least your winsome wenches?

WIFE. You'll find them yourself, or, certes, else you'll find them gone.

SOLDIER. I waste my time.

WIFE. And mine too.

(*Exit.*)

SOLDIER. That a man may change his king as he

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

changes his hat, and a new king put on a kingdom with a crown, this is for politicians to teach, and for a soldier to take with his pay. But, new king or old, the service is the same; and Pyrrha must die for it.

(Enter MILO and CREON with SOLDIERS.)

MILO. Climb every tree. If you can't, cut it down.

(Exit SOLDIER with the other SOLDIERS.)

I know not how you let that man make off,
Who Pyrrha's face had seen.

CREON. Touch not my care.
The fellow fled; and wisely; for your men
Are not so gentle as to reconcile
The Argives to King Agis. This I say,
Myself full reconciled.

MILO *(Aside)*. Turn-coat once,
And never to be trusted. *(Aloud.)* Anyway,
We know for certain that we close her round.
Why may she not be her?

CREON *(Aside)*. This is the cot
Where Idmon dwells. A shift to make him leave it
(Aloud.) I doubt much we have reached her. Up to
here

I tracked her ere I was recalled.

MILO. Why, then,
Here she should be.

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

CREON. She would not stay here long :
She must by now be hence. You are unwise
To spend our moments in so strait a search
Of here where she is not.

MILO. Here she is tracked,
And noway farther. She may be in this cot.

CREON. Well, I will search it.

MILO. Rather watch outside ;
And if she break out, seize her. (*Aside.*) I will trust
My bluntness ere his keenness.

CREON. As you will.

(*MILO goes into Io's Cottage.*)

Pray the king be not here. I see he doubts me,
But doubt me he need not. Right loyally Idmon
My service had ; and any heir of his
My service should have. But the land a king
Needs ; hence as I served Idmon, so I serve
Agis, e'en though it bring to death a maid.

MILO (*Within*). Found !

(*Re-enter with Io in PYRRHA's first dress.*)

And in her own raiment undisguised.
This must be she. We need no woodman here.

Io. No vassal I, to make my royalty !

MILO. Well, lady, I am hard of mood, and say
At once what I might mince. Victorious Agis

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

Would yield the gods your life.

CREON. Lady, your father
Doomed you to nothing worse. But though you
perish,

No mean fate stays your breath. The victim falls
Holy and consecrate.

Io. Trick not out
Death in fair colours ; for I can endure
To see him in his own.

MILO. You were a soldier,
Were you a man, whom I would choose to stand
At my right hand in battle.

Io. Lead now on ;
And when I give you cause, that praise unsay.

(Exeunt OMNES.)

(Re-enter COUNTRY WIFE.)

WIFE. The hurley-burley, and now is quiet ! I see
the last man of them ; their backs plated like green flies.
Lo, here young Daphnis ; and yonder that strange
maid. He dare not say *Bo* to her ! I make nor
meddle.

(Exit.)

(Re-enter DAPHNIS.)

DAPHNIS. The hollow tree doth lodge our visitors.
Thither will I return ; and lightly tell

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

What outlook I have kept. First, speer and pry
Within. What, sister ! Io ! Our cottage gapes
Empty as any grave the wolf hath found.

(*Re-enter PYRRHA.*)

PYRRHA. What news ?

DAPHNIS. When first I stole out from the tree,
I crept about the woods, but found no man ;
The soldiers were clean gone. So to our cot
I venture, but no Io here I find.

PYRRHA. Then they have borne her off to show the
track
She told them I had taken.

DAPHNIS. I know not ;
But there are stories how sometimes a maid
Is fairy, and at seasons she is changed
Into a timid doe. Could these be true,
And Io such an one ?

PYRRHA. Boy, you are wandering ;
She has been taken as a guide.

DAPHNIS. No, lady,
It cannot be but she into a doe
Is turned ; within our cot her gear is heaped ;
She's gone, and this is left us.

PYRRHA. What is to do ?
Daphnis, you know where lie my weeds of state.

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

See, are they safe. No, that will I myself.
I must piece hints together. (*Aside.*) In my
raiment

She has surrendered. Die for me, Io, more dear
Than life? (*Aloud.*) Sweet Daphnis, to my father
haste;

Tell him, till we know more, that Io leads
The hunt astray.

DAPHNIS. What is your drift, dear lady?

PYRRHA. I will up hill, and through yon gap in the
woods,

Scan the road down to Argos! Tarry! tarry!

(*Exit.*)

DAPHNIS. Oh, lady, for my sister am I sad,
But how much sadder if it were for thee!
And yet I dare not love thee. What's to do?
Yonder's the hollow tree where Idmon waits,
Till I bring word all's safe. Should he forth yet?
Hark! horse-hoofs beat the sward. All yet is
fear.

That was the clang of armour, as I live!
Oh, Pyrrha, a fair lily of the field,
Risketh rough injury in the woods, or chance
Of sudden capture for the sacrifice.
Pyrrha, I squire thee close!

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

(*Re-enter CREON.*)

CREON. Well met for me! (*Aside.*)
Boy, you are he I left to tend the king—
That blind lord was the king.

DAPHNIS. I know it, sir.

CREON. He told you? Well, by his command I
served

Agis, but never breathed himself still lived ;
Now must I speak with him.

DAPHNIS. But pray you, sir,
Have you seen one who might my sister be ?
For she is lost.

CREON. I hope she may be safe ;
But now this part was filled with Agis' men ;
I was one leader who was sent to find
King Idmon's daughter, Pyrrha.

DAPHNIS. Would you harm her ?

CREON. I would not now, could I re-act the past ;
But willingly I did.

DAPHNIS. Villain, what harm ?

CREON. Good boy, you call me true. We found
her, seized
And led her where she shall endure the taste
Of bitter death.

DAPHNIS. Villain, the same shalt thou !

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

Boar-spear to arms and armour in this cause !
Oh, villain !

CREON. Take my message to the king.
Waste not thy honest hate on me, good boy.
But unto old blind Idmon bear this word ;
Tell him if ever he hath known remorse
For that he once devoted her to death,
To save her now ; to Argos let him haste,
And there to Agis yield his body up,
To buy her life. I dare not meet his eyes
Nor any man's. When we had Pyrrha sure,
Smote then the damning blackness of our deed,
And wheeling round, I left them. In the wood
I left two horses ; set the king on one,
And, riding on the other, be before
The sacrificial knife !

DAPHNIS (*Aside*). First Io lost,
Now Pyrrha worse than lost !

(*Exit.*)

CREON. While I will wander
An exile from all men except myself,
Myself who juggled so with right and wrong,
That deepest wrong, murder and treachery,
Most crooked reason urged my heart think right.
Pyrrha I chased to make my lord stand firm ;

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

My lord I left when he no longer stood.
But evil never yet served country's good.

(Exit.)

(Re-enter PYRRHA.)

PYRRHA. A knot of horsemen make forth on the
way

That leads toward Argos ; and amid them rides
What seems a maid in white ! My fear's fulfilled !
True friend, sweet Io, wilt thou die my death ?
But thou shalt not. Oh me, how hard to die !
To near the end of perishing thought, and lose
The blue sky, love and friendship ; all whereby
The spirit knows itself ; to leave in midst
Of not yet ended hopes. Yet this thou bravest
Even to spare it me. Thou shalt not, Io !
I will win back my own death. If I falter,
I am more base than clay. Here in the woods
Stand two tall steeds, the hunters left belike.
One will I mount, and when the whizzing air
Sweeps by my brow, fear will not clog my heart.

(Exit.)

(Re-enter DAPHNIS, leading IDMON.)

IDMON. Hasten, boy ! Lead me ! Long have I
felt remorse,

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

But Creon's whets mine sharper. With my life
I will redeem hers that I once had spilt
To steady a base crown.

DAPHNIS. Oh! Ere too late!
To save her life I'll break my heart with haste.
(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE VI.—ARGOS. BEFORE THE TEMPLE OF
ARTEMIS.

(Enter EVADNE and MILO.)

MILO. She shows no dread here, Queen Evadne.

EVADNE. My good lord sleeps and eats, since you
bring home

The flying child of Idmon. Trusty friend,
You enthrone us sure.

MILO. Pyrrha is safe, in Argos here.

EVADNE. And shackled in great danger, for this
hour
Sheds her young life.

MILO. I am to fetch her forth now.

EVADNE. To the temple!

O Agis, thrive in to-day's ceremony!

(Exeunt severally.)

*(Enter, from Temple, PRIESTESS and MAIDS of
ARTEMIS.)*

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

MAIDS OF ARTEMIS (*Sing*).

Come, virgin sister, let us go our ways,
For to fulfil our vows,
With dirge and woeful praise,
Cypress garlands on our brows,
With garlands in our hands,
Pale garlands trailing ;
Weeping and wailing,
We votive maids a victim bound with bands
Bring to Thee, Goddess without spouse.

Pleasantly dancing, I remember well
How oft with jolly ode
And spicy clouds that smell
Fragrant, the air's heavy load,
We came in other mood ;
How oft with holy
Flowers of Moly
The green sward up and down we thickly strewed,
Merrily all round Thine Abode.

Where, in what forest drear, doth Dian dwell ?
Some month within the sky ?
Or, as old poets tell,
She far underground doth lie ?
Or else, where hunted beast,
By hunter stricken,
Lonely doth sicken,
There without priestess, without priest,
To Artemis the prey doth die ?

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

Under our breath ! For all the world is worth,
Breathe not too loud Her name !
Lay hand on the lowly earth ;
Blow in awe Her censed flame ;
Delve in the ground : there lay
Pyrrha to slumber
Years out of number ;
Throw on her face, throw in the silent clay :
A mound : then home the road we came.

Merciless Queen, behold, we are as grass
I' the meadows of Hellas ! Alas !

PRIESTESS. Hail, hail ! Alas, alas ! I shake my
hair

About my shoulders like a lion's mane.
Accursed, blessed priesthood ! Artemis !
Artemis ! Artemis ! The wail of lyres,
I hear the lyres that drown the captive's sobs
If they break forth. The issue is not here ;
Gods are above. Thou cutler's handiwork,
Bright as Jove's lightning, keener than our wit,
Interpret to me truly. Lo, I stand
Between the king and Goddess of our land !
(*Enter, with SOLDIERS, AGIS and EVADNE ; and MILO
with Io bound.*)

AGIS. Thou Deity untamed, here dost thou dwell ;

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

Within the pallor of this marble shrine ?
This is the crown, the sharp and central peak
Of our new realm, around whose base are piled,
Like lesser hills, palace and treasury,
And all that makes up Argos. But our grip,
Though firm, the dreadful Goddess will unclasp,
Yea, smite us as King Idmon, save we yield
First to her will in this. Pyrrha, be hers !
And thou who office sacrificial dost,
Assure to me, by that most holy act,
Yea, at the price of slaughtered innocence,
The kingdom !

PRIESTESS. Kings do kingliest show who bow
Before the Gods ; yet is your hope infirm ;
The longest reign is shorter than a life ;
A life at longest short. On whom shall light
Threescore years hence your crown ?

AGIS. I do not know.
Only appease the Goddess !

PRIESTESS. Kneel, Princess !
Laying thy palms upon thy bosom meek,
Say after me, (*Io repeats after her*) Artemis,
Giver of breath, take back the breath thou gav'st !
Our tribute of a life owns all life thine !

(*Enter PYRRHA.*)

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

PYRRHA. Hold! I am Pyrrha!

MILO. You are forward, girl.

PYRRHA. The maidens of the temple know my face.
Playmates, O holy Priestess thou, declare
Which Pyrrha, she or I.

PRIESTESS. We have no eyes,
No ears, we yield the Goddess whom thou wilt.
If a king's daughter, what makes that to us?
If it be not, what makes it? We will show
In words the oracle, but not in deeds;
If thou mistake, bear thou the wrong!

AGIS (*To Io*). Art thou
Not Pyrrha, daughter to King Idmon? Speak!
To claim it is to die.

PYRRHA. No, I am she!

Io. Who dares doubt who I am? I kneel pre-
pared
To take what fate belongs to her I am.

PYRRHA. You see how fearless and how firm she
is.
Can she have fled in terror of her life?
But I am timid, sirs.

MILO. It well appears.

PYRRHA. Indeed, I tremble and am sick at heart,
For very fear!

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

Io. The less king's daughter, sure !
EVADNE. And thou the more ? How ? Daughter
more or less ?

MILO. Answer in one word ; are you she or no ?

Io. I am.

PYRRHA. She is not.

MILO. What perverted pride
Can make two maids, but to seem royally born,
Bid thus for death ?

PYRRHA. There was a woodman seized,
Who saw me fleeing ere I donned disguise.
Where is he ?

AGIS. Set him here before us.

MILO. Sire,
That double traitor Creon, ere he fled,
Let the man go.

PYRRHA. She has possessed herself
Of what I wore. I'll trip thee up in speech,
If we discourse. (*To Io.*)

Io. I'll not discourse.

PYRRHA. Nay, Io ?
Judge her detected.

Io (*Rising*). I inherit pride ;
And how should pride discourse upon her rights,
That holdeth them, defiant of disproof ?

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

PYRRHA. My pride begone! I will be put to proof.
Let me the sanctuary's recesses thread,
Where I was reared, and let her do the same.

AGIS. This proof shall be essayed.

PRIESTESS. Dread lord, it may not.
If the Gods will that thou shalt reign, their sign
Shall guide thy choice, we will not aid. We bend
Whate'er betide, to heaven, but the temple
We do forbid to all.

MILO (To AGIS). Let lots decide it.

PYRRHA.	}	No!
Io.		

AGIS. Chance is not fate: I will not trust to lots.
Largess will buy the truth.

MILO. Or, maybe, lies.
The priestess Pyrrha shields, for her she reared,
And loves her as her own.

(Enter IDMON, led by DAPHNIS.)

AGIS. Hide thee in Hades! If Hecate send thee
back
To certify we are the fools of Fate,
I know that kings are mortal.

EVADNE (To AGIS). Why dost pale,
And stare upon yon harmless aged man,
As he were all thy sins?

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

MILO. It is king Idmon.

EVADNE. He is flesh ;
If it be Idmon, he escaped the bolt.

IDMON. Agis, not to let slip your realm as I,
I hear your purpose is, as mine was erst,
To slay my daughter. Which though I had done,
In reparation I now yield my head
That had found shelter in the woods secure,
Even to what thou wilt, who art my foe,
In ransom of her life. I crave as boons,
Who here did late command, the bonds, the blow ;
Let the blow pass by Pyrrha.

AGIS. No will is ours
To harm thee. But our throne no less demands
Pyrrha a sacrifice. Which of these is she,
If thou art Idmon, show us !

IDMON. I am blind,
Nor have, these ten years, seen her.

EVADNE. Pyrrha's voice
He knew. Bid speak these maids.

AGIS (*To Io*). Speak, art thou Pyrrha ?
Io. Albeit I must die that thou mayst reign,
What I have said, is said !

AGIS (*To IDMON*). Whose voice says this ?

PYRRHA. Io's ! O father, can she mint my tone

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

Until your ear tells not the counterfeit
From the true coin ? You know that I am Pyrrha.

IO. Father, you know my voice. Am I not Pyrrha ?

AGIS. Guide us, and yours are life and liberty !
Which voice is hers ?

IDMON. What do you think I am,
That I would not deceive you ? Trust me not :
True to my daughter makes my words untrue :
If I say this is she, and I say truth,
That truth betrayeth her to death.

MILO (*To DAPHNIS*). Thou, boy,
Knowest thou aught of these ?

DAPHNIS (*Aside*). One is my sister,
And one I love. (*Aloud*.) My Lord, how should I
aught ?

AGIS. Then—and the day is short for more
debate—

This only course remains. That one is Pyrrha
We must believe ; for where could two be found,
As one of these needs is, infatuate
Wrongly to claim such danger ? To make sure
And found our empire as it were in rock,
Both shall be sacrificed !

EVADNE. Good counsellor !
Ye twain, kneel for the knife.

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

(PYRRHA and Io kneel.)

MILO. My liege, your cause
Long have I served in dark and doubtful deeds,
As well as fair ones. And I would not stick,
Since many bled to seat you where you sit,
At one's advised death. But in cold blood
To slay two maidens to make sure of one
Is ruthless prudence.

AGIS. To justice
She dies who dare such high estate usurp!
MILO. I am not often touched. But let me plead
Once mercifully. You, sire, have gotten offspring;
And just of such an age as these are now
Would be your first two children.

AGIS. Tenderness
Is in my steeled bosom dead as they;
They both are gone.

MILO. Gone, but you know not dead.

AGIS. You said you saw them dead?

MILO. That was untrue.

AGIS. Liar?

EVADNE (*Aside*). False fellowship in crime!
Murder, trust none!

MILO. Listen; Evadne her own son to advance—
Crush me with vengeance, cruel I have been,

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

But not a coward!—gave into my charge
Your girl and boy to slay them, telling you
That tale how robbers snatched them from your
home.

AGIS. Those thieves you slew and brought to me
their heads.

MILO. I slew two guiltless men and brought their
heads,
And said your girl and boy I dead had found,
And laid them on the pyre. But in the woods
I left them living. Not four summers old
The girl, the boy yet younger. If they died
I know not. But remember, while you strike,
Perhaps your children may that mercy need
That you deny.

AGIS. Milo, I trusted thee;
Thus thou repayest my trust! If this be true,
Let the seas roll between us; but if false,
Thine is that death which else shall light on thee,
Evadne, dark Medea of our house!
Where are my children?

EVADNE. Wherefore ask of me?
Am I thy children's keeper? Thou art wise;
Ask wisely, then, where likely knowledge can
Instruct an answer.

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

AGIS. Thou art wise over-much ;
But if thou dare use subtlety to me,
Fair as thou art, I'll pluck thee limb from limb !
Where are my children ?

EVADNE. Ask the howling woods,
Bears, wolves and boars that do the woods infest ;
But never me. Ask woodmen, fowlers,
Swart charcoal-burners and their wives, not me.
I meant their deaths, good lack ! Must I confess
Unto the subject ear ? I am too vile,
To pollute sanctuary. Only this,
I was a mother, and I loved my boy
Better than good or evil. I but echo,
Where are our children ?

DAPHNIS. Left ? And in the woods ?
Sire, do not think me over bold, this chain
Do your eyes know ?

AGIS. Around his neck my boy
This chain had ever clasped. Where was it found ?

DAPHNIS. 'Twas found on me ; and both found in
the woods,
Sixteen years back.

AGIS. I think I see my bride
Peer through your eyes. My boy had on his neck
A ruddy mark.

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

DAPHNIS. My liege, such mark have I.
(*Bares his neck.*)

AGIS. Oh, flesh and blood! I was a naked stem,
And time restores my fruitage. Hyacinth,
My very son—yea, thou art Hyacinth—
I reel and stagger like a drunken man!
Thou, queen, expect thy doom. (*To DAPHNIS.*)
Where is thy sister?

DAPHNIS. Here, Sire.

AGIS. Ye Gods, in darkness toward what gulf
I trod!
(*Raises Io.*) Up from thy knees, for fear the Goddess
fell

Smite thee before our face! So, now to breathe.
Oh, how imprisoned kindness, years long starved,
Would grace returning freedom! What wouldst, son,
That we a king, to ride upon the top
Of bounteous love, may grant our new-found son?

DAPHNIS. Sire, since my state is princely, and I
stand

Her equal there, though in nought else,
With her consent, I crave this lady's hand.

Io. Alas, where Pyrrha kneels!

DAPHNIS. Spare her, O Sire!

AGIS. If she be Pyrrha, worthy her estate!—

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

Though she be Pyrrha—mine be any fate
She lives and shall be thine !

PYRRHA. Daphnis ! Hyacinth !

IDMON. Pyrrha, my daughter, speak thy heart !

DAPHNIS. Princess, what answer ?

PYRRHA. I am thine, death or life !

PRIESTESS. Well said !

And now is riddled out the oracle
We gave but could not understand. Behold,
Life and not death delighteth Artemis,
Goddess of youth and noble womanhood.
Now let this wedding be the sacrifice
Even of life and self : self given up
To the World-Mother.

AGIS. Here yield I up my crown,
Fulfilling destiny, to this young head
Whose boyhood finds what we, too careful, missed.
Rule henceforth, Hyacinth !

DAPHNIS. Am I truly king ?
And is a king my father ? My first act
Makes Milo not an exile ; and revokes
Thy doom, defeated queen. Rise, free as air
For us ! But thou, our father, in like mood
Take her back to thy breast.

AGIS. I do forgive thee.

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

Yet shalt thou live apart, wedlock annulled.

IO. Lo, lo, she wrings her hands! Wilt not make
peace?

AGIS. Yet turn again, I re-instate thee.

EVADNE. Oh, I am overpowered!

MILO. Pardon subdues us both.

DAPHNIS (*to PYRRHA*). Thy hand, fresh queen.

PYRRHA. I know a song; wilt hear it? for, by good
chance,

It speaketh prettily to the point.

DAPHNIS. Sing, Pyrrha.

PYRRHA (*Sings*).

Bind my brow with linden sweet
And the honeysuckle yellow,
That each bloom and tassel greet
Everyone his odorous fellow.
Play a music wild and mellow.
Let the dangers that are over
Counsel us to live in clover.

Tempest now hath spent his blast,
And is gone to join the seasons,
Testy Springs and Autumns past,
Summer drought and Winter treasons.
I will give thee lovers' reasons
Wherefore to pay joy I borrow
Sighs and tears of very sorrow.

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

Love, come take me in my tears,
Weeping by this hallowed altar,
Love, before my courage falter.—
Oh, adieu, my girlish years !

DAPHNIS. Come. Sister mine, and more, my
Pyrrha's friend,
We three part never.

Io. So our troubles end.
For I will join this perfect sisterhood,
These Maids of Artemis.

PRIESTESS. It shall be good.
Happy young king, two kings, one proved and
sage,
One bold and warlike, guard your scarce-ripe age.
Scorn not their counsel, yet your own deeds choose !
The gods give—thine it is their gifts to use.
March to song, Maids who marriage hope do lose !

MAIDS OF ARTEMIS (*Sing*).

Let us bury Death in a grave ;
And dance above his head ;
The sad flowers we gave
To lie upon the dead
Blossom to crocus and hyacinth,
Smelling of amaranth.

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

Why? For our darling shepherd came :
The maid shall be a dame.

'Tis with the meeting of lips,
And touching of finger-tips !

Come, O April and May ;
Come, O June and July !
As in a pastoral play,
Let bride and groom go by !

Playfellows, never be dumb ;
Carol this afternoon !
Go gather wild honeycomb,
For the honey-moon.

Oh, for a bower to be rigged,
For our turtle doves ;
And a garden to be digged,
And planted with myrtle and cloves

Chirp, Dan Grasshopper,
Chirrup and chirp in the grass ;
Pipe, winds of the air,
Whistle and pipe as ye pass !

O holiday summer and sun,
And, O spring showers of rain,
Come, as ye ever have done,
To go away again !

THE MAID OF ARTEMIS

But, O ye jovial Gods,
As for this woman and man,
Make even all their odds ;
And bless us every one !

Yea, for a year and a day
He shall not go forth to war !
Home, the nearest way ;
Royal as they are !

So shall they thrive in peace,
Like a happy king and queen,
In Argolis of Greece,
All in an antic scene !

(Exeunt Omnes.)



0921

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 685 786 6

